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A Path from Inner Transformation to Civilizational Rebirth: An Integrated Vision of Revival in the Thought of Muhammad Iqbal and Malek Bennabi

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Abstract

Muslim world are facing multifaceted challenges in the twenty-first century. Among these challenges of the modern era, the decline of Muslim civilization and loss of Muslim identity are of the primordial focus of contemporary Muslim intellectuals. Among the leading thinkers, Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and Malek Bennabi (1905-1973) are two eminent scholars of 20th century who not only analyzed this problem, but also offered a solution to revive Muslim *ummah*. Although both thinkers emerged from different socio-political settings, they realized that the cause of Muslim decadence is not rooted in political subjugation alone rather the real cause lies in their spiritual, moral and intellectual demise. The current study will explore their approaches to civilizational revival in first two sections– with Iqbal focusing on reconstructing religious thought and the concept of Selfhood (*Khudi*); and Bennabi focusing on the revival of ideas and the termination of colinizability. Whereas, the last two sections will be comprised of comparative analysis and concluding remarks to ascertain that both intellectuals (if put together) can help pave a path leading from inner transformation to civilizational rebirth in order to attain authentic Islamic renaissance. Their complementary paradigms integrate moral-spiritual regeneration and socio-intellectual reconstruction that is relevant for Muslim world in the current era.

Keywords: civilizational revival, Islamic renaissance, Colinizability, *Khudi*, modernity, inner- transformation

Introduction

The quest as to why Muslims are vulnerable to colonization has plagued Muslim scholars since 19th century till date. Furthermore, how to regain the lost vitality of Muslim civilization was another quest that Muslim intellectuals tend to answer since the fall of Ottomon Empire. Muhammad Iqbal in the subcontinent and Malek Bennabi in Algeria, both analyzed that the root cause of the downfall of Muslim civilization lies in spiritual and moral decay. They asserted that colonization of the Muslim world and the demise of Ottoman Empire were not resulted by foreign invasion and domination; instead, gradually Muslim empire began to decline internally in terms of spiritual and intellectual life.

Iqbal sought spiritual awareness and creative action to wake Muslim nation of colonial India; whereas, Bennabi sought sociological conditions to rise from intellectual stagnation in Algeria. Both intellectuals believed that revival of Muslims is possible through profound transformation of mind and soul.

1.1. Historical and Intellectual Background

Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), a philosopher-poet of East, was born in Sialkot (present-day Pakistan). He was educated in MEO College, Lahore; followed by Cambridge and Munich for higher education. Iqbal was exposed to Western culture and thought where he got influenced from eminent thinkers like Bergson, Friedrich Nietzsche, Goethe etc.[1] He was a philosopher-critic and the greatest poet of his time. His expression and style are poetic, symbolic and philosophical in nature that includes his prose work like *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930) and *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (1908). His poetic works includes, *Asrar-e-Khudi* [*Secrets of Self*] (1915), *Rumūz-e-Bekhudi* [*Mysteries of Selflessness*] (1918) *Bāng-i Darā* [*The Call of the Marching Bell*] (1924), *Javed Nama* (1932), *Armaghan-e-Hijaz* [*Gift from Hijaz*] (1938), *Baal-e-Jibreel* [*Gabriel's Wing*] (1938). Iqbal's reflection on western civilizations, imperialism and capitalism emerged from his deep engagement with Islamic philosophy, Sufism, western thought and colonial experience of South Asia.[2] Iqbal has experienced cultural and religious decline during British subjugation. So, he encouraged Muslim *Ummah* to integrate faith with modern knowledge; and to reinterpret Islamic teachings through reason and creativity in order to revive the vitality of Muslim civilization.

Malek Bennabi (1905-1973), an intellectual, born in Constantine (colonial Algeria) was a sociologist-civilization theorist. He was educated in Algiers and France in Engineering. Despite from a religious background, his focus shifted to philosophy and social sciences after being exposed to Western thought.[3] During postcolonial period, Bennabi experienced cultural detachment and intellectual dependency in the Arab world.[4] Being influenced by Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1326), Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), and Ibn Abdul-Wahhab's (1703-1792) writings.[5] he developed a civilizational theory that examined the root cause of Muslims decadence. The expression and style in his works are mainly analytical, systematic and historical like *The Conditions of Renaissance* (1948) and *The Problems of Ideas in the Muslim World* (1957) where he has emphasized on rebuilding a productive Islamic civilization. However, due to his writings in French (primary) and Arabic (secondary) languages, Bennabi did not garner readership among the Arab world till 1980's.[6] After 1980, he is celebrated among the reformers to bring renaissance (*nahdha*) in the Muslim world.

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[1]Iqbal admired Nietzche's (1844-1900) rebellion against decadence and his call for strength and creativity as (*Ubermensch,* Superman) to overcome mediocrity. This was later used in his concept of *Khūdi*; however, Iqbal criticized his approach due to lack of roots in God-consciousness and theism; and extreme pessimism.

[2]Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Glory on Iqbal,* trans., Mohammad Asif Kidwai (Lucknow: Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, 1973), 45-57.

[3]Badrane Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* ed., Alison Lake (The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2013), 17-18.

[4]See Nighat Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," *Ulum-e-Islamia* 30, no. 2 (2023): 33.

[5]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 18-19.

[6]Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," 34; Badrane Behlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, no. 1 (2023): 2, https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.01

1.2. Limitations of the Study

The current study is limited by the differing historical, cultural and intellectual contexts in which both intellectuals thought and wrote. Iqbal and Bennabi works emerged from distinct socio-political settings: colonial India for Iqbal and postcolonial North Africa for Bennabi. This makes direct comparison challenging and at times, interpretively delicate. Moreover, the analysis part of this article relies heavily on secondary sources and translated versions (especially Malek Bennabi's French language work) remain difficult to access or evaluate comprehensively. The study also adopts a selective thematic focus: i.e., Iqbal's concept of *Khūdi*, reconstruction of religious thought, critique on western civilization; and Bennabi's civilizational renewal, religious ideas, and the revival of Muslim society– which does not cover the complete essence of their contributions. Regardless of these constraints, the study provides valuable insight into shared concerns and divergent strategies in Muslim intellectual reforms; and paves way to more expansive future research.

2. Iqbal's Vision of Civilizational Revival

2.1. Concept of Selfhood (*Khudi*)

Iqbal is multi-dimensional figure whose poetry and philosophy encouraged Muslims to regain their identity.[7] His thought criticized both Eastern and western ideologies as incomplete and void.[8] He was against blind following of tradition (*taqlid/* imitation) as it leads to passivity and loss of consciousness of inner strength– ultimately causing the decline of Muslims.[9] Therefore, he developed his concept of selfhood (*Khūdi*) in both his prose and poetry. *Khūdi* is defined as a dynamic divine spark and harbors creative potential within an individual.[10] He associated his philosophy of selfhood with developing Ego[11]: "The climax of religious life, however, is the discovery of the ego as an individual deeper than his conceptually describable habitual selfhood. It is in contact with the Most Real that the ego discovers its uniqueness, its metaphysical status, and the possibility of improvement in that status."[12]

He represented the same concept symbolically in his poems:

"In deserts! By Selfhood only arc the spells
Of sense broken,—that power we did not know"[13]

[7]Fariha Naz, and Muhammad Asif, "Contemporary Clash of Civilization and Iqbal`s Thought," *Journal of Languages, Culture and Civilization* 4, no. 4 (2022): 465–73, http://dx.doi.org/10.47067/jlcc.v4i4.151

[8]"Slavery, slavishness, the root of our Disease; of theirs, that Demon holds all power; Heart-malady or brain-malady has oppressed; Man's whole world, sparing neither East nor West." [Muhammad Iqbal, *The East and the West,* Trans., V. G. Kiernan (Iqbal Academy Lahore, n.d.)].

[9]Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* ed., Saeed Sheikh (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 2012).

[10]Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *Poems from Iqbal,* ed., J. L. Cranmer, trans., V. G. Kiernan (London: John Murray Ltd., 1955), xv.

[11]Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing- A Study of the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (E. J. Brill, 1963), 382.

[12]Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* 78.

[13]Muhammad Iqbal, *Poems from Iqbal,* 29.

Khudi is an essential part of Iqbal's philosophy that is foundational in reviving civilization and regains Muslims glory.[14] In another poem he highlighted the importance of developing selfhood for entire nation:

"A nation's life is illumined by selfhood,
Selfhood is the pathway to everlasting life"[15]

The idea of '*Khudi'* and 'Ego' are pivotal in encouraging Muslims to act as an active agent in the changing world.[16] The human ego (I amness) has a potential to succeed, evolve and progress; as well as degenerate and fail. Man can develop and alleviate his Ego in accordance with the Qur'ānic teachings and *Sunnah*; and can be intimately linked with 'Ultimate Ego' (God).[17] In *Secrets of the Self* (*Asrar-i-Khūdi*), Iqbal claimed that ego has to pass through three vital stages to attain spiritual ascension: Obedience to Divine law (*Itt'at*), self-control (*Dabt-e-nafs*– supreme sense of sub-consciousness) and vicegerency of God (*Niyabat-e-Ilahi*).[18] The absence of this divine spark in Western ideology led to its moral decadence.[19]

According to Iqbal, in order to revive civilization, it is mandatory to revive 'selfhood' by restoring will, faith and action that is embedded in revelation and moral values. Only a spiritual awakened individual can revive society as a whole. He explained traits of *Khudi* in *Gabriel's Wing* (1938),

"Selfhood in the world of men is prophethood;
Selfhood in solitude is godliness;
The earth, the heavens, the great empyrean,
Are all within the range of selfhood′s power"[20]

2.2. The Critique of Western Civilization and Reconstructing Religious Thought

Despite admiring western scientific vigor, Iqbal criticized western ideologies of capitalism and nationalism on the grounds that they lack spiritual values leading to their moral decadence, excessive materialism and dehumanization.[21] Whereas, the Muslim world or eastern civilization lacks modern technological advances as they have abandoned rationality. He admired East for their spiritual values and love (*ishq*) and west for its intellectual values (*aql*).[22] He was against the idea of Muslim stagnation due to reveling in the glory of Muslim's' past. As a modernist thinker,

[14]Hasan Azad, "Reconstructing the Muslim Self: Muhammad Iqbal, Khudi, and the Modern Self," *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 2, no. 2 (2014): 14-28, https://doi.org/10.13169/islastudj.2.2.0014

[15]Muhammad Iqbal, *Allama Iqbal Poetry,* (1938), http://iqbalurdu.blogspot.com/search?q=selfhood (accessed April 24, 2025).

[16]Azad, "Reconstructing the Muslim Self: Muhammad Iqbal, Khudi, and the Modern Self," 21.

[17]Muhammad Irfan Iqbal, "Iqbal's Philosophy of Khudi," *The Qur'ānic Horizons* 3, no. 2 (1998): 49.

[18]Irfan Iqbal, "Iqbal's Philosophy of Khudi," 50.

[19]Irfan Iqbal, "Iqbal's Philosophy of Khudi," 52, The fake ideas of freedom and liberty will constraint individuals in the form of slavery that we can see in consumerism, materialism and capitalism of secular world-view.

[20]Muhammad Iqbal, *Allama Iqbal Poetry,* 1938, http://iqbalurdu.blogspot.com/search?q=selfhood (accessed April 24, 2025).

[21]Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Islam and Open Society - Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal* (Dakar: Codersia, 2010), 2-4; Masood A. Raja, "Muhammad Iqbal:Islam, the West, and the Quest for a Modern Muslim Identity," *International Journal of the Asian Philosophical Association* 1 (2008): 43-44, https://www.asianpa.net/assets/upload/articles/2YGsUVLnh0gKxCid.pdf

[22]Raja, "Muhammad Iqbal:Islam, the West, and the Quest for a Modern Muslim Identity," 39.

Iqbal believed that reconstruction of Islamic thought is required in the light of modern science and rationality.

He reconciled the best of both eastern and western worlds in order to offer a balanced civilization.[23] By integrating spiritual transcendence and socio-rational progress in his lecture, *Is Religion possible?* Iqbal provided a vision much ahead of his time:

> Neither the technique of medieval mysticism, nor nationalism, nor atheistic socialism can cure the ills of a despairing humanity. Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture. The modern world stands in need of biological renewal. And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it in hereafter. It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.[24]

This reconstruction would enable Islam to retain modernity without losing its spiritual essence. Thus, he developed a concept of civilization that is grounded in dynamic teachings of Qur'ān, creative individuality and collective moral action.

3. Bennabi's Theory of Civilizational Revival

3.1. The Concept of Colonizability

Bennabi has observed the after effects of post-colonial rule. Based on those assertions, he classified Algerian colonial rule into following stages:[25]

- **i.** the conquest and resistant stage
- **ii.** the resistant stage and colonial intensification
- **iii.** total colonization and native acquiescence stage
- **iv.** the stage of Algerian awakening.

Malik Bennabi introduced 'colonizability' in his work, *The Question of Culture* (*Mushkilat al-thaqāfah*) where 'colonialism' and 'colonizability' are interconnected. He termed them as external and internal factors affecting each other. He describes it as the moral and intellectual condition that makes people vulnerable to domination.[26] The colonized mindset can imitate those who had dominated it, but it is incapable of innovation and creativity. Such subservient mindset can only consume rather than produce. In order to define culture, we need to tackle the problem from three different perspectives to bring out psycho-social elements.[27] Therefore, the real problem is not colonization itself but the internalized colonized mind-set that has rendered people

[23]Raja, "Muhammad Iqbal:Islam, the West, and the Quest for a Modern Muslim Identity," 39.
[24]Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* 80.
[25]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 19.
[26]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 7.
[27]Malek Bennabi, *The Question of Culture [Mushkilat al-thaqāfah],* Trans., Abdul Wahid Lu'lu'a (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2003 [1959]), 28.

dependent.[28] Bennabi asserts that Muslims have to liberate their thought and restore moral and intellectual productivity in order to revive civilization.

3.2. The Concept of Civilization & the Role of Religion

For Bennabi civilization is a byproduct of three elements activated by an idea– man, soil and time.[29] The intention of defining civilization as a mathematical formula enables him to segregation the crisis of civilization into three problems (i.e. man, matter and time).[30] Furthermore, for Bennabi, the social role of religion is to act as a catalyst in order to transit values from "a natural to a psycho-temporal state, commensurate with a certain stage of civilization."[31] Additionally, "Religion plays a vital role during a civilization's inception, expansion, and evolution. The shared ideas expressed by religion are not abstract concepts but are shaped by collective formulation and common social practices."[32] Hence, religion is an essential and integral to direct these three elements towards civilized progress.[33] "Religion creates a spiritual relationship network that, on the one hand, connects people's souls to their belief in God and, on the other hand, binds them together in a horizontal network of interactions."[34] This relationship is inspired by religion and manifested into historical events woven into the web of 'network of social relations.'[35] Although he was influenced by historical progress of Hegel (1770-1831), August Comte (1798-1857), and Karl Marx (1818-1883) but he felt that it was too theoretical and Eurocentric. So, he merged the latter concept with Arnold J. Tonybee (1889-1975) and Ibn Khaldun concept where historical change is seen as cyclical.[36]

After establishing the fact that the society undergoes a periodic phenomenon known as civilization that represents a social stage which is an ongoing process of human development.[37] Bennabi also introduced three psycho-social ages of development: 1) the age of objects; 2) the age of people; 3) and the age of ideas.

Every society has a unique and complex cultural universe where ideas, objects and the realm of people are integrated to provide meaning to the aforementioned ages.[38] They are also tools for Bennabi to ascertain whether the society as a whole in its historical context is ascending or descending. According to him, "… culture has a functional relationship with humankind."[39]

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[28]Bennabi, *The Question of Culture [Mushkilat al-thaqāfah],* 16-31.

[29]The equation: man (all individuals involved) + soil (matter) +time (all controlled period of time) = civilization; whereby religion inspired their relationship. See Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization*, 8; Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," 35-36.

[30]Benlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," 3.

[31]Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," 39.

[32]Benlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," 4.

[33]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization*, 8; In here, Bennabi defined religion as a sort of connective force (i.e., either divine or social in origin) that an individual has. Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," 39.

[34]Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," 38.

[35]See Benlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," 4.

[36]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization*, 21; Malek Bennabi, and Asma Rashid (trans), "Islam in History and Society," *Islamic Studies* 18, no. 01 (1979): 35.

[37]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 4-5.

[38]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 13-14.

[39]Malek Bennabi, *The Question of Culture [Mushkilat al-thaqāfah],* 50.

Consequently, he perceived civilization both in its functional role as well as sociological perspective.[40] An individual in civilizational process is important in performing its social roles.

It is worth pondering that Bennabi not only confined to defining 'religious idea', but he provides an in-depth analysis regarding the significance of religion in the civilization process– including historical function of religion and psycho-social dimensions.[41] Hence, the term, 'religious idea' encompasses all forms of ideologies and beliefs that enable to transform and rebuild society.[42] It is the thriving and driving force to build civilizational values that interconnects individuals with their social relationships and Almighty.

3.3. The Role of Ideas, Culture and Cultural Transformation

Civilization is the by-product of cultural transformation, so it is mandatory to first renovate the individual as per Islamic traditions in order to transform society in a holistic manner.[43] The stagnation of Muslim world stems from sterile ideas that suppresses creativity and deform life.[44] According to him, despite having political and material wealth a civilization can still decline if they lose its creative idea.[45] For Bennabi, creating an idea alone remains insufficient until we channelize those ideas towards "the direction of social goals that we want to realize."[46] In order to revive civilization, that creative idea needed to be revived for Muslims on Qur'ānic worldview and moral order.[47] Bennabi observed that Muslims are incapable of producing a progressive civilization in the current subjugation of colonized mindset. Therefore, the foremost step towards cultural transformation is to reconstruct Muslim personality (in reference to 'man' from his equation) in terms of his wealth, thought and labor.[48] Moreover, cultural transformation is linked with transforming Muslim mind and vice versa.[49] This should not be confused with the conflict between individual verses society; rather "we should conceive of culture as a dynamic human milieu that provides educational and ethical training for the betterment and refinement of the individual and society."[50]

Based on the above hypothesis he defined culture as a total sum of ethical traits that an individual acquires in his life through living human environment; and incorporates those habits in his personality.[51] "The concept of orientation (*tawj'īh*), according to Bennabi, refers to harmony in the movement of a civilization, unity in objectives, and avoidance of conflict between efforts starting from the same sources and aiming at similar objectives."[52] He suggested that the future of Muslim youth and Islamic supremacy is depended on the realization of importance of 'coexistence

[40]Benlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," 4.
[41]Benlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," 6-10.
[42]Benlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," 11.
[43]Abdulaziz, Berghout, "The Concept of Culture and Cultural Transformation: Views of Malek Bennabi," *Intellectual Discourse* 9, no. 1 (2001): 67-83.
[44] Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," 35.
[45]Malek Bennabi, and Asma Rashid (trans.), "The Conditions of the Renaissance," *Islamic Studies* 36, no. 4 (1997): 643–55.
[46]Bennabi, *The Question of Culture [Mushkilat al-thaqāfah],* 46.
[47]Malek Bennabi, and Asma Rashid (trans), "Islam in History and Society," 38; Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 2.
[48]Berghout, "The Concept of Culture and Cultural Transformation," 68.
[49]Berghout, "The Concept of Culture and Cultural Transformation," 69.
[50]Berghout, "The Concept of Culture and Cultural Transformation," 72.
[51]Berghout, "The Concept of Culture and Cultural Transformation," 72.
[52]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 8.

of cultures' that is only possible if we comprehend the concept of culture and civilization the way he have interpreted in his work.[53]

4. Comparative Analysis

Based on theoretical discussion in the above sections, following is the comparative table that shows how both thinkers diverges in their reformation theories.

Table 1. Comparative Study of Malek Bennabi and Muhammad Iqbal

Dynamics of their Thought	**Muhammad Iqbal**	**Malek Bennabi**
Area & Colonization	Subcontinent (present-day Pakistan) British colonial rule	Algeria French colonial rule
Core Philosophical Concerns	Concept of selfhood (*khudi*)[54]	Theory of Colonizability; productive ideas
Methodology and Intellectual Orientation	metaphysical and religious in orientation	Methodology derived from social sciences, (particularly socio-historical)[55] and analytical in orientation.[56]
Cause of Decline	Spiritual passivity, blind following of *taqlid* and neglecting reason attributes to loss of faith, creativity and self-awareness	Mental dependency, moral decay, and sterile idea that allows foreign domination
Nature of Crisis	A crisis of soul– loss of spirituality and moral courage	A crisis of mind– loss of creative ideas and cultural productivity
Role of Individual	For Iqbal *mard-e-momin* (empowered individual) is central and initiating point of reform[57]	Individuals are important but are secondary to society,[58] as society creates culture of creativity and responsibility
Role of Society	Society can solely change after the transformation of individuals moral character	Society can change when ideas and values are transformed; and reflected by institutions

[53]Bennabi, *The Question of Culture [Mushkilat al-thaqāfah],* 100-101.
[54]Muhammad Iqbal, *Poems from Iqbal,* xv-xiv.
[55]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 20.
[56]Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Approach to Civilization,* 22.
[57]"The *momin* is a world-reality, above and beyond the limitations of time and space. He cannot be imprisoned by the boundaries of race, politics or geography… Iqbal's Superman is timeless. He belongs to no particular place or country. The whole world is his home." Nadwi, *Glory on Iqbal,* 98.
[58]Malek Bennabi, and Asma Rashid (trans), "Islam in History and Society," 36.

Dynamics of their Thought	Muhammad Iqbal	Malek Bennabi
Role of Religion	Dynamic creative and rational force shaping civilization	Religion is a catalyst factor from which civilization arise.[59] In order to attain social renewal, moral and intellectual revival is essential
Critique of the West	Despite admiring scientific and philosophical progress, he criticized West for excessive materialism and lack of spiritual foundation[60]	Technical advances with moral and cultural void. Bennabi also believed that technical superiority of west is owed to intellectual vitality of Muslims they once had.
Epistemological Stance	Knowledge must unite reason, revelation and intuition	The purpose of knowledge is to serve civilization especially if its wound around moral values
Epicenter of Revival	Philosophical and Spiritual: religious and moral reconstruction; and developing *Khudi*	Intellectual and sociological reconstruction of society; reawakening of ideas and moral[61]
End Goal	Creation of spiritually free, morally upright and God-conscious Ummah leading a just society	creating a morally responsible and autonomous society based on moral productivity n creativity which is capable of producing civilization

4.1. Synthesis: Towards an integrated Vision of Revival

It is interesting to note that like other civilizational scholars (Ibn-Khaldun, Arnold J. Toynbee etc.) both Iqbal and Bennabi associated religious understanding mandatory part of civilization.[62] Additionally, both are reformists and modernist thinkers who firmly believed that civilization cannot be revived through external reforms solely. Instead, reforms are required to be internalized either through spiritual purification (in Iqbalean thought) or through intellectual decolonization (in Bennabi's thought).

[59] See Rasheed, "Malek Bennabi's Contribution to Islamic Thought," 39-40; "Bennabi's emphasis on religion extends beyond its essence and divine source, to its critical social role as a catalyst of human energies and capacities. As a social thinker, Bennabi sought to identify the necessary conditions for bringing about a renaissance of civilization in the Muslim world." Benlahcene, "Civilizing Role of the "Religious Idea" in Malek Bennabi's Thought," 5.

[60] Iqbal, "The Spirit of Muslim Culture," in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* 54-62; Gul Naif Zakki, Aziz-ur-Rehman Saifee, Muhammad Rehan, "The Evaluation of Two Conflicting Civilizations: In The Light of Futuristic Vision of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal," *Al-Azhaar Research Journal* 8, no. 01 (2022): 1-13, https://www.al-azhaar.org/index.php/alazhar/article/view/406

[61] Bennabi, and Asma Rashid (trans.), "The Conditions of the Renaissance," 643-55.

[62] Benlahcene, *The Socio-Intellectuall Foundations of Malek Bennabi Aapproach to Civilization,* 4.

Muslim world has lost its identity owing to modern-day challenges, oriental and traditionalist rigidity, militancy; and western lobbies propagating against Islam. The current demise of Muslims is multi-faceted and requires battling on two fronts: i) with non-Muslim fanatics and Islamophobics; ii) with orthodox scholars and religious clerics (*mullahs*). In the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal and Malek Bennabi, Muslims can seek a perfect blend that can enable reformers to bring necessary reforms to face these challenges. By synthesizing their vision of revival, Muslims can integrate metaphysical and sociological framework that can paves a path that initiates from inner transformation to rebirth of civilization.

5. Conclusion

For Bennabi, the freedom of Muslims from conservatism, dormancy and orthodoxy can be altered by civilizational construction and cultural orientation.[63] He analyzed the causes of demise among Muslim civilization; and conditions for its renaissance.[64]

Iqbal and Bennabi represent two complementary and distinct ideas of civilizational revival in the Muslim world. Although they are connected by colonial background and resolution in Islamic thought, both harbor different approaches to revive Muslim identity. While Iqbal emphasized on the renewal and inner transformation of soul; Bennabi emphasized on renewal and reformation of mind and society. In Iqbalean sense, change begins when individual seeks their true potential and act like vicegerent of Almighty. For Bennabi, change begins when societies collectively overcome psychological dependence, and produce creative ideas.

They reject excessive imitation of the West and assert that a revival is possible on Islamic principles and moral values. Iqbal approach inspires spiritual energy, whereas Bennabi's approach provides the intellectual framework for that energy to shape a progressive and productive civilization. By integrating their complementary approaches and implementing on Muslim societies, we can build a civilization that is spiritually awakened, organized and culturally progressive.

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